

Tips on poster presentation

POSTER IS NOT CINEMA POSTER

Students are encouraged to give a poster presentation in a conference, rather than an oral presentation, if it is for the first time. This is quite a reasonable advice because many students are nervous to give an oral presentation when they are inexperienced. Poster presentation naturally becomes the first option. Another reason is that many professional conferences are packed with oral presentation of papers and actively encourage authors to do posters instead. The best reason for offering a poster, however, has to do with the content of your presentation. Oral paper sessions generally allot just 15 minutes for a speaker. After the formalities one may get a maximum of 10 minutes. If the methodology is complicated, it may be a better idea to present it in a poster, where your colleagues will be able to take their time with the information and ask you questions at greater length. In the recent times the direction and usefulness of poster presentation is completely lost. No original content is included in the poster. Presenters believe that original content is necessary only for oral presentations. Many pictures down loaded from the internet, arranged without any sense of aesthetics, without leaving open space and using bright colour have defeated the very purpose of a poster presentation. Many posters look like cinema posters and that is the last description attributable to a scientific poster.

Through a poster, one is expected to present the results of a research work, experimental data on a new material or a clinical case report. History of a subject and reviews should not be considered for a poster.

QUALITIES OF A POSTER

Get the message across with effective *visual displays of data* and small blocks of supporting text. Consider poster as an illustrated abstract.

The poster should tell the readers why the work is important, what was done, what was found, and what do you recommend. Avoid excessive focus on methods -it's the results and implications that count!

Use a pleasing arrangement of graphics, text and colors. The poster should be neat and uncluttered - use white space to help organize sections. Balance

the placement of text and figures. The poster size should be 4' x 3' preferably in landscape format.

Use headings to help readers find what they're looking for: objective, results, conclusions, etc. A columnar format helps traffic flow in a crowded poster session.

Minimize text - use graphics. Keep text in blocks of no more than 50-75 words - don't create large, monolithic paragraphs of prose.

An acceptable layout should contain 20% text, 40% graphics and 40% empty space.

All text should be large enough to be read at a distance of 1-2 meters, including the text in figures. Title should be larger, to attract attention from far away.

Use color cautiously. Dark letters on light background are easiest to read. Stick to a theme of 2-3 colors. Avoid overly bright colors -they attract attention but causes fatigue to the reader's eyes.

Include full contact information. You want to be found - the reader should not have to enquire some where else to find you.

Prepare a 3-5 minute verbal explanation. Some people will ask you to "walk me through your poster." In making such a presentation, don't read the poster. Instead, give the big picture, explain why the problem is important, and use the graphics on your poster to illustrate and support your findings and recommendations.

Prepare a summary handout. You want people to remember your work - a handout provides a written record for readers. You can include a miniature version of your poster plus more detailed graphics, tables, and prose. The handout is something else you can refer to when talking to people about your work. Be sure to include complete contact information. Get your message across with effective *visual displays of data* and small blocks of supporting text.

TITLE FONTS

- Use a simple, easy to read font. A *san serif* style, such as Helvetica or Arial is ideal. (96 point size)
- Use boldface and all-caps for the title only.
- Use boldface and mixed upper/lower case for the authors names. (72 points)
- Use plain text, no boldface, and mixed upper/lower case for affiliations. (36 points)

SEQUENCING CONTENTS

The poster should use photos, figures, and tables to tell the story of the study. For clarity, it is important to present the information in a sequence which is easy to follow:

1. Determine a logical sequence for the material you will be presenting.
2. Organize that material into sections (Methods, Data/Results, Implications, Conclusions, etc.).
3. Use numbers (Helvetica boldface, 36-48 points) to help sequence sections of the poster.
4. Arrange the material into columns.
5. The poster should not rely upon your verbal explanation to link together the various portions.

POSTER TEXT

Double-space all text, using left-justification; text with even left sides and jagged right sides is easiest to read. Section headings (Introduction, Methods, etc.); use Arial/Helvetica, Boldface, 36 point

Supporting text (Intro text, figure captions, etc.); use Arial/Helvetica, 24 point (boldface, if appropriate)

If you must include narrative details, keep them brief. They should be no smaller than 18 point in size, and printed in plain text.

One option is to consider using a larger size (36 pt) for the Conclusion text, and a smaller size (18 pt) for Methods text.

Other options for fonts include Helvetica, Arial, Geneva, Courier, and Prestige. Note that these fonts represent a range of letter spacing and letter heights. Keep in mind that *san serif* fonts (having characters without curls or other embellishments) are easiest to read.

Finally, be consistent. Choose one font and then use it throughout the poster. Add emphasis by using boldface, underlining, or color; italics are difficult to read.

COMPONENTS

Introduction

This section should start with the general research objectives, then provide a few lines about the context of the work, and end with a clear statement of the objectives.

Methods

Keep the methods section brief. Give the bare essentials about the subjects, study site, and protocol. Don't be so brief that we can't figure out what you did, but do give some thought to what is really relevant to this particular talk.

Results

What did you find? Did your tests come out the way you expected? This section will probably involve little text and more graphics .

Discussion and Conclusions

This is really the take-home message. Again, in 25 words or less, what is the dramatic finding that you want your audience to remember? And why should they care? This is very important, because your colleagues will want to learn not only about what you did but also about why it is significant. Be prepared to address this issue, briefly in your poster and in greater depth when talking with your colleagues.

ASSESSMENT OF A POSTER

Overall appearance

1. Cluttered or sloppy appearance. Gives the impression of a solid mass of text and graphics, or pieces .are scattered and disconnected. Little white space.
2. Pleasant to look at. Pleasing use of colors, text, and graphics
3. Very pleasing to look at. Particularly nice colors and graphics.

White space

1. Very little. Gives the impression of a solid mass of text and graphics.
2. OK. Sections of the poster are separated from one another.
3. Lots. Plenty of room to rest the eyes. Lots of separation.

Text / graphics balance

1. Too much text. The poster gives an overwhelming impression of text only. OR Not enough text.
2. Cannot understand what the graphics are supposed to relate.
3. Complete. Enough 1 Balanced. Text and graphics are evenly dispersed in the poster; enough text to explain the graphics.

Text size

1. Too small to view comfortably from a distance of 1-1.5 meters.
2. Easy to read from 1-1.5 meters
3. Very easy to read.

Organization and flow

1. Cannot figure out how to move through poster
2. Implicit. Headings (Introduction, Methods, etc.) or other device implies organization and flow.

3. Explicit numbering, column bars, row bars, etc.

3. Explicit. This includes headings of "Objectives", "Aims", "Goals", etc.

Author Identification

1. None.
2. Partial. Not enough information to contact author without further research. This includes missing zip codes on addresses
3. Full information to contact author by mail, phone, or e-mail without further research.

Main points

1. Can't find.
2. Present, but not obvious. May be imbedded in monolithic blocks of text.
3. Explicitly labeled (e.g., "Main Points", "Conclusions", "Results").

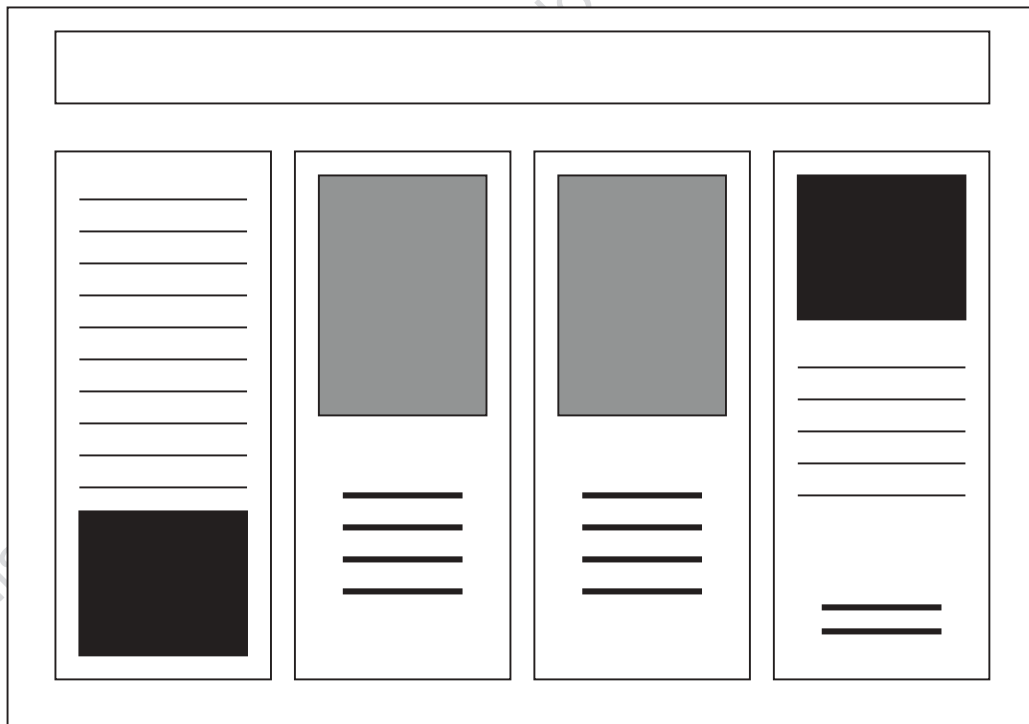
Research objective

1. Can't find.
2. Present, but not explicit. Buried at end of "Introduction", "Background", etc.

Summary

1. Absent
2. "Summary", "Results", or "Conclusions" section present

A sample layout of poster



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